





O U R  
MILITARY EXPERIENCE  
AND  
WHAT IT SUGGESTS.

*Alexander Buchanan, Esq. Garrison*

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“To what purpose are the qualifications for arms without discipline to render them efficient?”—*Lord Bacon.*

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# OUR MILITARY EXPERIENCE

AND

## WHAT IT SUGGESTS.

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THAT the course of the war thus far has not been very flattering to our arms, must be admitted. A country of eight millions of white inhabitants, has, as yet successfully resisted the twenty millions of the Northern and Border States. Nothing is to be gained by deceiving ourselves in these matters. The skilful surgeon makes a careful examination of the wounded patient he would benefit, though the process be a painful one.

On several occasions our arms have met with decided and universally admitted reverses. Even when we have claimed victories, they have usually been of rather an equivocal kind. After Antietam, the enemy left Maryland as it were at his leisure, and not so much because we whipped him as because he failed to whip us, and it was necessary for him to have done this, if he wished to remain north of the Potomac. At Shiloh our troops were driven to their gunboats on the first day, and on the second, the enemy were driven back but a short distance by the fresh reinforcements under Buel. Perryville, despite newspaper exaggerations always read to us more like a defeat than a victory, and we cannot see that we had much cause to boast about Murfreesborough. From our own accounts of that battle, General McCook was badly whipped and driven back the first day: on the next, there was little or no fighting; on the third day the enemy at-

tempted to drive us further, and having failed, they retired in the night. Bragg claims to have taken back with him several thousand prisoners, two hundred wagons, thirty-two cannon and a great number of small arms.

### SOUTHERN MILITARY POLICY.

Do we know any reasons why the South, as a military power, should have been comparatively more successful than ourselves? They have doubtless a great advantage in the fact that they are fighting on the defensive, on their own soil and surrounded by a friendly population, but besides these, there are other very important causes in operation.

Their military organization seems to approach more nearly the character of a *regular* army than our own. Much has been said about the folly of raising soldiers by draft and conscription, but we believe this has for the most part been but buncombe and bombast. An army of conscripts implies a strong military power in the Government which can not only make the citizen a soldier, but will subject him to such discipline as will make him a good one. For carrying out a thorough military system the South has shown peculiar sagacity in the selection of its leader. He was educated to the profession of arms, served in the field, and for four years filled the office of Secretary of War. As a politician it was not his style to give vent to those clap-trap speeches to the prejudice of the military profession, and a permanent regular organization, which for many years past have been so common in the mouths of demagogues and fourth of July orators.

When Secretary of War he advocated the increase of the pay of the army, the addition of several new regiments, and the concentration of troops in large garrisons for purposes of instruction. He showed his confidence in Military men over mere partizans and spoils seekers by advocating the Military Superintendency of the armories, the Military control of the Indians, and consequent abolition of many enormous partizan abuses in the Indian Department, and in the appointment of an army officer to the supervision of the capital extension, and other Public Works, despite the clamors of disappointed party jobbers and would-be contractors.

When four new regiments were raised, all the field officers save one, and the ranking half of the Captains and Lieutenants were promoted from the old army in accordance with his wishes as Secretary of War. When he accepted the leadership of the rebellion, he announced that all officers of the regular army who would enter the Confederate service, no matter from what section of the country they might come, should receive equal or higher rank than they were then holding, and the same or greater pay—commissions too were sent to the graduates of the Military schools of the South all over the world wherever they could be found. The establishment of these Military schools shows that the South as a people appreciated Military knowledge; and the profession of arms has always been more popular among them than at the North. When the war broke out, it found most of our prominent generals who were Military graduates, in civil life, as McClellan, Rosecrans, Halleck, Burnside, Hooker, Sherman, Curtis, and others. It found however, Lee, the two Johnstons, Beauregard, Longstreet, Van Dorn, Huger and other prominent Southern officers still in the army. The governing classes of the South were fully capable of appreciating what was necessary to render an army effective, and when they committed their section to rebellion, and found that war was to be the result, they bent every energy to perfect their Military system by which alone they could hope for success. They knew that popular enthusiasm alone could not be relied on to keep up armies when the miseries of war had been long and extensively experienced, and they placed their chief reliance upon the force of authority and discipline.

From all that we have learned of their armies, we have reason to believe they are subjected to a discipline very much more rigid than our own. It has been a common report that their officers do not hesitate to shoot down their men on the field for the slightest wavering or disobedience of orders, and they have a precedent for this in the orders of Washington in our revolutionary war. We have read frequently of some of their men having been shot or hung, and a statement has been going the rounds of our papers that several of their officers had been reduced to the ranks, because of unauthor-

ized absence from their duties. I have been told the following by a person who professes to have positive knowledge of the facts. A soldier of the rebel army applied to his General for his discharge having received a certificate from his Surgeon and Captain that he was *ruptured* and unfit for Military duty ; the General nevertheless ordered him to go to duty which he refused to do, and before twelve o'clock *next day* he *was shot*.

#### NORTHERN MILITARY POLICY.

In the North we have had an army of more than a million of men since the war begun, and in spite of very considerable insubordination and occasional mutiny, it is probable that not more than half a dozen military executions have thus far taken place. All of us recollect how in the early stages of the war certain regiments had to be coerced into obedience by a regular battery and squadron of cavalry, and how the major part of another regiment (now out of service) continued its retreat from Bull Run all the way to New York, and there held an indignation meeting, declaring that their disgust for the service had proceeded from the fact that their Colonel had told them that the *Zoo Zoo* drill was played out ; in other words, that standing on their heads and turning *cart wheels* might all be very fine for circus actors, but was not exactly the drill for soldiers. Only the other day we read of half a regiment of cavalry refusing to go into action for no other reason, so far as we have yet heard, than because *they did not want to*.

All of our public measures have been very considerably influenced, either directly or remotely, by a class of people who in times past have been in the habit of sneering at the military profession, who affected to despise its ranks and grades and inequalities, and who looked upon a sixth ward politician as of more consideration than the most accomplished officer. Even now, and on the floor of the Senate are heard expressions of contempt towards the Military school of the nation.



## WEST POINT.

One gentleman opposed the academy because of its *exclusiveness*, yet the *members of Congress* are the parties who *make the appointments*. Of course it is *exclusive*, for if it can but educate three hundreds youths at a time, some two or three millions or more must necessarily be kept out ; on the same principle these gentlemen would most likely think Congress an exclusive body, particularly if they happened to be among the *outs* instead of the *ins*. We commend them to study the philosophy of a remark attributed to the President in reference to an appointment to office he was about to make—"that when two men wanted to ride the same horse one must get behind." One Senator thought that West Point was the *cause* of the rebellion, the *politicians* according to him could have had but little to do with it. Could the Senator have thought that the country could be deceived by such a statement as this? What candid man believes that secession would ever have been inaugurated by the officers of the Army? Men from all sections of the country, for the most part bound together by the memories of a common Alma Mater, partaking of a common exile upon our wild Indian frontiers where it was their custom to wile away many an hour in talking over the scenes of their West Point home, bound together by the ties of the regiment and the mess, and actuated by the same *Esprit du Corps*, the officers of the Army were eminently a conservative and national body of men. These men were believers in law, authority and discipline, and in supporting the dignity and power of the General Government, and no class of men in our country were more thoroughly disgusted with the contempt constantly offered the Federal Government by demagogues, and spoils hunters, Mormons, squatters, whiskey sellers, "*et id omne genus*."

As a class I believe I am right in saying of them that they did not sympathize with the doctrines of universal suffrage, rotation in office, frequent elections for all kinds of officers, and the many other ultra democratic, radical and destructive political principles which have gained a baleful

ascendancy among the people and in the policy of the country, since the good old conservative party of Washington, Hamilton, Adams, Jay and Marshall was destroyed.

It is to the demagogues who have brought about this state of things, and not to our conservative little army that this rebellion is more properly attributable, and indeed I have sometimes thought that if the "Peace Convention" had been composed of Army officers alone they would all still be serving under the same old flag of a happy and undivided country, instead of meeting each other in deadly conflict.

The officers of our army too, living as they did in isolated garrisons upon the frontiers, have been very extensively bound together by marriage connexions, and no class of our community has been so great a sufferer by this terrible war which has severed their dearest ties and rushed them sword in hand against each other foremost in the fight on every battle field.

Of the general officers who have thus far fallen in this war for the Union, probably two-thirds, (we write from memory,) were of the old regular army. We recall the names of Lyon, Sill, Terrell, Williams, Stevens, Reno, Mansfield, Bayard, Kearney and Richardson, all of whom belonged to the old army, and except the last two were graduates of West Point.

I have no apology to offer for those officers who have deserted their colors, and to attempt to do so would be a base reflection upon the many brave and loyal Southerners who are still true, and who are among the very best officers in our army. But I do say that the Southern officers, as a body, left our army with deep sorrow that the *politicians* of the country had made it in their opinion necessary for them to do so, and very generally when parting from their comrades they declared that they resigned because they could not fight against their brothers, but would never take up arms against the Old Flag. It is a melancholy fact however that when they went home they did not long resist the pressure and remain idle amid such a contest, and though we must acquit West Point of inaugurating, advising or desiring this rebellion, we believe it would have been com-

paratively but a weak affair without the military genius and influence of her Southern sons.

We now recur to the West Point debate in the Senate.

One *military* Senator thought that not a ray of genius had emanated from a graduate during the war, and another said that West Point had been a positive *obstruction* to our armies, probably referring to *Davis, Lee, Johnston, Jackson, Beauregard, Bragg, Longstreet, Van Dorn, the Hills, &c.*

Other members based their opposition on the grounds that their constituents did not like the institution, which is usually a potent argument with an M. C. Unfortunately we fear this *levelling* disposition is but too common among constituents. "What right has them stuck up Jones's to hev their boy Tom edikated by Uncle Sam, when I hev to pay old Ichabod Crane five dollars a quarter for the schoolin of my four boys. That West Pint is a aristocratick institushun and i'll write to the members from this deestrick and hev it busted up right away."

In the French revolution it was regarded by the radicals a crime against the state to have had a grandfather, and that class of thinkers in these days, seem to look upon military education in the same light. So great is their love for equality (which in reality only exists in the purely abstract science of mathematics) and so great is their hatred to rank and grades that we would scarcely be surprised to hear from them a proposition to do away with officers altogether.

But fortunately for the country, we have some men in position, who, like Senator Nesmyth, can see that education in any business is certainly worth something, and that cities now-a-days are not to be taken by the "*blowing of horns*," a practice which we think by this time ought to have been "*played out*." The fact is, that at the South, West Point, with Davis for a leader, controls the politicians, but in the North, the reverse is very near the truth.

So far as the charge of exciting jealousies in the army is concerned, West Point would confidently submit her cause to the verdict of the officers of the old army who were appointed from civil life.

In a former article, (in the Baltimore American,) we have considered the evil system which has been followed in officering regiments, and by which so many incompetent persons obtained commissions. We will quote the article.

#### OFFICERS.

“ I saw it stated in Saturday’s paper, that General —— had ordered that any officer who offered his resignation, should be dishonorably dismissed the service. I know not if this be so, but I believe the general fact is true, that during the war there has been much difficulty experienced in getting resignations accepted. A Surgeon told me that he knew an officer who behaved in a disgraceful manner during an action, and that after it was over, he himself told the officer to his face, that he was a coward, although he did not prefer charges against him. The officer immediately handed in his resignation but it was weeks before it was accepted and his place supplied with a better man. When a new regiment goes into action, it is not unlikely that some of its officers may become convinced of the fact that war is not their *forte*, and before another comes off, may hand in their resignations, and certainly it seems the true policy to accept them at once. Cases undoubtedly do occur, when resignations should not be accepted, and officers should be dishonorably dismissed the service, but if it be understood that all who offer their resignations are to be treated in this way, it will have the effect of keeping men in service who are sensible of their own unfitness for the positions they occupy.

Now what can we expect of an army if many of its officers are serving as *such* under compulsion. They are to be the leaders, yea, the despotic leaders of their men if success is to be attained, for despite their inferiority in numbers, the influence of the officers upon military results in proportion to that of the men, is at least as one hundred to one. If men have the right kind of officers they can be made to go wherever their officers will go, and stay wherever and as long as they will stay. With such officers, men soon learn that obedience is less dangerous than is the contrary.



The grand mistake made by the North in this war has been in ignoring the great relative importance of the officers in military organizations, and in adopting a vicious method of officering regiments.

The usual system has been that a State Governor has given some political adherent the privilege of raising a regiment, and has probably appointed also the other field officers. These have made it known that whoever would bring them a certain number of men, should have a Captain's commission, and that for some smaller number a Lieutenant's commission would be given. Now, it is evident, that under such a system, the men who have "popularity" enough to raise a company will frequently be about the worst men for officers. Indeed it is questionable whether it would not be nearer the truth to say, that the fact of a man's "popularity" in such cases is rather a proof of unfitness than otherwise. And when good men do obtain company commissions through the favor, as it were, of their men, this fact itself must materially interfere with military discipline.

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Brigade Surgeons have told me that even the appointing of medical officers to regiments from their own neighborhoods was attended with many serious evils. In the affairs of *civil* life, the mechanic who hopes to succeed, will not permit familiarities towards his foreman or boss, or on the part of his journeymen and apprentices.

The fact of it is, the spirit of the North has been too democratic in its tendencies to establish a thorough military system. It has been disposed to flatter the many, and exhibit a jealousy towards the few in authority, it listens too readily to complaints of inferiors against their superiors, and its presumptions are always in favor of the governed against the governors. This spirit is necessarily antagonistic to a system whose corner stone is implicit obedience to superior authority, even at the risk of life itself. Indeed many of the men and journals that are fierce for this war, have been noted in time past for denouncing military establishments, as an useless expense, military science as a humbug, and military men as mercenaries and coxcombs. In

their view, patriotism was the only defence the country would ever require; yet in this war, the patriotism of the volunteer has been stimulated by double the pay that was given to the old *mercenaries*. It may be said that it is necessary to officer our armies in the manner alluded to, in order to induce the men to volunteer. Better then raise the men by "draft;" and it is not so "certain, whether from the first this would not have been the best way of raising an army, and whether such men with good officers, would not prove more efficient than those who carry with them into the ranks the idea that military service is, on their part, only a *voluntary* affair."

As bearing upon some of the views expressed in the above article, we will merely allude here in passing to the leniency which our people have regarded and unfortunately still regard the high military crime of desertion.

#### STATE QUOTAS.

Having considered some of the evils by which regiments have been officered, we may here say a few words as to the way in which the States have recently been furnishing men.

To avoid the draft, large bounties were offered, and such ruinous facilities given to enlistment, that as a consequence, our hospitals are crowded with broken down men, who have scarcely seen any service, who only entered and *drew their bounties* a few months ago, and who ought never to have been enlisted at all. In some cases, the parties who induced unsuitable men to enlist, are now busy in endeavoring to procure their discharge, and we have no doubt cases could be found where parties have enlisted two or three times, and drawn several bounties, who have never heard the gun of an enemy.

#### OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

Another evil of our military system is, that of *outside* interference. Members of Congress, and politicians in their public and private capacity are busy looking after the interests of their constituents, who are privates, officers, sutlers or contractors in the army. Self-constituted commissions

and committees of all kinds, and both sexes, are busy at work in military affairs, sometimes no doubt for good, but we candidly believe in the main for evil. Much of the good too has only been apparent, and has been done by outsiders, not so much because the government machinery was inadequate, but because the people clamored for their right to interfere, and the government organization had to yield.

Another class that has had considerable influence, both immediate and remote, upon our affairs, comprise the *visionaries* and *philanthropists*, who are unfit to be trusted with any practical common sense business, who believe in vegetable diet, Thomsonianism, &c. and who meet together seriously for the purpose of doing a great deal of good, by changing women into men, and abolishing the laws of nature in various other respects. From such influences we could derive no benefit in carrying on the eminently practical business of war.

We believe many soldiers have been made *home-sick*, and disgusted with the service by the officiousness of State agents and rose-water philanthropists.

### VOLUNTEERS, NOT ALWAYS VOLUNTEERS.

It is time now for the Union party to take a practical view of affairs, and to discard the follies which political stump orators have been teaching them for so many years. While they give all honor to those who have entered our army from patriotic motives, they ought to see the necessity of keeping it up and making it efficient. Every paper startles us with statements as to the great numbers of officers and men absent from their regiments without leave. It is probably no exaggeration to say that if to-morrow every man of our army (a *voluntary* one though it be) were permitted to do as he pleased, not fifty thousand would be present at roll call twenty-four hours afterwards. Not that so many, perhaps, as this implies, would seek to absent themselves permanently, but they would not be on hand or available. Practically then, even a *voluntary* army must be kept together by discipline and compulsion.

## UNION SENTIMENT OF THE SOUTH.

But few now, I suppose, look for much *material* support from the Union sentiment of the South. No doubt at the commencement of our troubles there was a large Union party there, but many of them are now in the Army, and have lost fathers, sons and brothers in the war. They may have been compelled to enter the service, but soldiers cannot long fight for a cause without wishing it to be successful, and will readily forgive any amount of discipline on the part of their officers, provided they but lead them to victory. Military success then is what we want, and the negro question, habeas corpus question, and indeed all others should be looked upon as but secondary. Now, a military force to be thoroughly efficient, particularly for conquest or invasion, must be subjected to the stern discipline of regular troops. The better to illustrate many of the points discussed in this article, we will take a short glance at our country's wars, beginning with the Revolution.

In doing this it has not been our desire to draw invidious comparisons; but so much has been written and said on these subjects for mere "buncombe," that we believe a little wholesome truth is justified and demanded by the occasion.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

During the Revolution, Washington wrote volumes to Congress on the necessity of an adequate regular military establishment, and the inefficiency of other kinds of troops. We quote a few extracts from Sparks' "Life of Washington." Speaking of the militia, the General says, "Great numbers of them have gone off, in some instances, almost by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies at a time. With the deepest concern I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops. Men who have been free and subject to no control, cannot be reduced to order in an instant." Again, he says, "it is not easy to be conceived, except by those who are witnesses to it, what an additional waste and consumption of every



thing, and consequently what an increase of expense results from laxness of discipline in the army; and where the officers think they are doing the public a favor by holding their commissions, and the men are constantly fluctuating, it is impossible to maintain discipline."

Moved by his (Washington's) representations and appeals as well as by their own sense of the necessity of the case, Congress determined to reorganize the army on a plan conformable in its essential features to the suggestions of the Commander-in-Chief, they who for a long time cherished a lingering hope of reconciliation, were at length convinced that the struggle *would not soon terminate*, and that it must be met by all the means which the wisdom, patriotism and resources of the country could supply. *To the resolute and discerning*, this had been obvious from the moment the sword was drawn. The events of a year had impressed it on the minds of all. The new army was to consist of—— Thus matured, the plan was sent to the Commander-in-Chief—but General Washington perceived defects in the scheme which he feared would retard, if not defeat its operations. The pay of the officers had not been increased, and he was persuaded that officers of *character* could not be induced to *retain their commission on the old pay*, (what *mercenaries* were these revolutionary officers, our sentimental radicals would say.) The mode of appointing them was defective, it being left to the *State* governments, which would act slowly without adequate knowledge, and often under influences *not salutary* to the interest of the army. \* \* \* \* \* At length, also the States being negligent and tardy in the providing for the appointment of officers, Congress authorized General Washington to fill up the vacancies.

"By a formal resolve, he was authorized to displace and appoint all officers under the rank of Brigadiers, and to fill up vacancies in every part of the army.

"Some of the States had neglected to complete their appointments, and generally, these were made with so little judgment, and with such a disregard of military rules that *officers without worth or experience had been put over the heads*

*of those who had been accustomed to service, and had given proofs of their valor and ability.* By his power to displace and fill up vacancies, Washington rectified these errors as far as prudence would permit—he took care to promote meritorious officers who had been overlooked by the State.”

Our three most memorable and important successes in the revolution, the capture of Burgoyne, the campaign of the Jerseys and the capture of Cornwallis, were almost exclusively attributable in the first two instances, to what were called the “Continental troops” or, “troops of the line” and in the last case to these troops and the French combined.

Crayden, an officer in the Continental Army says, “yet in the day of trial from whatever cause it proceeded, the fate of the country and its liberties was always committed to a handful of *mercenaries* the very things which were the eternal theme of our *scorn* and *contempt*.” We have seen with what extraordinary authority Washington was invested by Congress in the matter of officering his army; and the policy which he sought to pursue in its exercise may be judged from the following extract from a letter which he wrote to Colonel Baylor, who was to command a regiment of light-horse; he says “as nothing contributes so much to the constitution of a good regiment as a good corps of officers and no method is so likely to obtain these as leaving the choice in a great measure to the gentleman who is to reap the honors, or share the disgrace of their behavior, I shall vest you with the power of nominating the officers of your regiment, except the field officers, claiming to myself a negative upon a part or a whole, if I have reason to suspect an improper choice. I earnestly recommend to you to be circumspect in your choice of officers. Take none but *gentlemen*; let no local attachments influence you; do not suffer your good nature when an application is made to say “yes,” when you ought to say “no.” Remember that it is a public not a private cause that is to be injured or benefitted by your choice. Recollect also, that *no instance has yet happened of good or bad behavior in a corps in our service that has not originated with the officers.*”

Take none but *gentlemen*, says Washington, what an unavailable old foggy would he have been for public office in the times of the "Latter-day Saints."

"As bearing upon the subject of 'officers' as well as discipline, we quote from 'Irving.' 'There is a great overturning in the camp as to order and regularity,' (writes the military chaplain,) 'new lords, new laws. The Generals Washington and Lee are upon the lines every day \* \* \* The strictest government is taking place, and great distinction is made between *officers* and *soldiers*. Every one is made to *know his place and keep it*, or be tied up and receive thirty or forty lashes, according to his crime.'"

The following extract from a letter of Washington in Sparks' life shows his policy towards mutineers.

"The fatal tendency of that spirit which has shown itself in the Pennsylvania and Jersey lines, and which derived so much encouragement from impunity in the case of the former, determined me at all events to pursue a different conduct with respect to the latter. For this purpose, I detached a body of troops under Major General Howe with orders to compel the mutineers to unconditional submission, and *execute on the spot* a few of the principal incendiaries. *This has been effected this morning*, and we have reason to believe the mutinous disposition of the troops is now completely subdued and succeeded by genuine penitence."

The "continental" troops were for the most part originally raised only for the war, but Washington was not insensible of the superiority and necessity of an adequate *permanent* military establishment, and urged the matter upon Congress. He says "supported by a prospect of permanent independence the officers would be tied to the service, and would submit to many momentary privations, and to the inconveniences which the situation of public affairs make unavoidable. This is exemplified in the Pennsylvania officers, who being upon this establishment, are so much interested in the service, that in the course of months there has been only one resignation in that line."

And again he writes, "the next, and I believe the last

thing I shall have time to touch upon, is our military establishment; and here if I thought the conviction of the necessity of having a *permanent* force, had not e'er this flashed upon every man's mind, I could write a volume in support of the utility of it, for no day or hour arrives unaccompanied with proof of some loss, some expense, or some misfortune, consequent on the want of it. No operation of war, offensive or defensive, can be carried on for any length of time without it. No funds are adequate to the supplies of a fluctuating army, *though it may go under the denomination of a regular one.*"

And again we are told, "an incident is related as having occurred while he was in the Convention for forming the Constitution, which was probably suggested by his experience during the war. A member proposed to introduce a clause into the Constitution, limiting a standing army to five thousand men. Washington observed he should have no objection to such a clause, if it were so amended as to provide that no enemy should presume to invade the United States *with more than three thousand.*"

## THE WAR OF 1812.

In this war though the navy achieved some signal victories, the land forces on the whole acquired but little glory. A few pages are brightened by the records of Fort Stephenson, Lundy's Lane, Bridgewater and Chippewa, where regular troops and their officers, Brown, Scott, Ripley, Towson, Jessup and Croghan, redeemed, to some extent, the disgrace which the militia had brought upon our arms.

Nor should the brave Barney who stood with his marines by the bridge at the Bladensburg *raids* be overlooked, nor the gallant defenders of Fort McHenry. Even the battle of New Orleans which we talk so much about (and which was won by a regular officer,) is a most wonderful illustration of the daring and steadiness under fire, which masses of men may attain by regular training and thorough discipline. There the British regulars marched up to breastworks with the flints knocked from their muskets; on arriving at the



ditch, it was found that through some mistake, the regiments that had charge of the fascines and ladders had not come up, and the troops stood there under a deadly fire, which they could not return until ordered to retire, after some fourteen hundred men and three commanding Generals had been killed or wounded. To the bungling of the British Generals and their contempt of their enemy, is mainly attributable their defeat at New Orleans.

## THE MEXICAN WAR.

In the Mexican war we all remember what troops fought *Palo Alto* and *Resaca*—what composed Worth's and Twiggs' divisions which did most of the fighting on the lower line, and what was the character of Ringgold's, Bragg's, Duncan's and Sherman's batteries.

The following tabular statement of the killed and wounded in the Mexican war, taken from official sources will best illustrate this part of the subject.

	Mean Strength.	Killed and Mor- tally wounded.		Wounded not Mortally.	
		Officers	Men.	Officers.	Men.
Old Regular Force, . . . . .	15,736	63	729	118	1685
Additional Regulars (for the War,) . . . . .	11,186	10	133	36	286
Volunteers, . . . . .	73,532	47	517	129	1189

It will thus be seen that the absolute loss in battle by the old army numbering less than sixteen thousand men, exceeded that of the "war regulars" and volunteers together, and which amounted to about eighty-five thousand men.

Almost one-half of the whole loss of the volunteers was in the battle of "Buena Vista," where there were no regular troops, save a few batteries, and companies of dragoons; a battle that was more nearly lost than any that was fought in Mexico, yet saved principally by the stubborn determination of the veteran general in command, and the cool steadiness of the regular artillery.

## THE PRESENT WAR.

We suspect there are persons who will almost be surprised to hear that at present we have any regular army at

all, so much have they read in long newspaper letters of the exploits of the bloody 901st, or gallant 900th, or the Fremont Body Guard. But letter-writing for newspapers is not the forte of regular soldiers, and has always been discouraged in well disciplined armies. At Big Bethel and the first Bull Run fights there were a few regular troops engaged, and from all accounts they did fully as well as could be expected from so small a number. In the first of these fights Greble, and in the latter, Tillinghast was killed.

Immediately after the Bull Run panic, the few "regulars" about the Capital were used to exercise a wholesome coercive power over certain highly patriotic, but rather mutinous volunteer regiments. On the Peninsula all the regulars, except a few batteries, were in the reserve, of which they constituted the greater portion. In the battle of Gaines' Mills, they nobly maintained their part of the line, but it was at Malvern where these troops, particularly the artillery, best showed their true metal.

There was a brigade of regulars in the battle of Murfreesborough, under the command of General Rousseau, himself a volunteer. As to their conduct in that fight, we extract the following from one of the papers of the day.

"In the report of the battle—lasting five days—General Rousseau uses the following language in regard to the brigade.

"The brigade of the United States Infantry, Lieut. Col. M. Shepherd commanding, was on the extreme right; on that body of brave men, the shock of battle fell heaviest, and its loss was most severe.

"Nearly one-half of the command fell, killed or wounded; but it stood up to the work and bravely breasted the storm; and, though Major King, commanding the Fifteenth, and Major Slemmer, (old Pickens) of the Sixteenth, fell severely wounded, and Maj. Carpenter, commanding the Nineteenth, fell dead in the last charge, together with many other brave officers and men; the brigade did not falter for a moment. These three battalions were a part of my old Fourth, at the battle of Shiloh.

“The Eighteenth Infantry, Majors Townsend and Caldwell commanding, were new troops to me; but I am proud to say we know each other now. If I could I would promote every officer, and several non-commissioned officers and privates of this brigade of regulars for gallantry and good service in this terrific battle. I make no distinction between these troops and my brave volunteer regiments; for in my judgment there were never better troops than those regiments in the world; but the troops of the line were soldiers by profession, and, with a view to the future, I feel it my duty to say what I have of them. The brigade was admirably and skilfully handled by Lieut. Colonel Shepherd.—This is high praise to come from such a man as General Rousseau. He is no untried holiday soldier. He is emphatically the fighting general, and qualities which elicit such praise as this from him must be of very high order.

“The country will not fail to remember his conduct at the fight at Chaplin Hills and Shiloh, and in the semi-official account of this fight [Murfreesborough] it is said of him—‘It was again the fortune of General Rousseau with his division to change the fortunes of the day. The right wing of our army, under command of Major Gen. McCook, had been completely overwhelmed and driven from its position, by the overwhelming masses of the enemy, and Gen. Rousseau, with his division, with the brigade of regulars on the right, was ordered to move into position to check the victorious and pursuing enemy; and well he performed the task.’—His message to General Rosecrans, in the hottest of the fight is characteristic of the man: ‘Tell the general that I shall stay here—right here.’ And he did stay.

“The regular brigade suffered severely. Of the officers, twenty-six were killed or wounded, and of the enlisted men six hundred and eleven.”

In another part of this article it is stated that Shepherd’s brigade consisted of seventy officers and fourteen hundred men.

An officer who has been serving with a regular regiment in the war, informs me that it has thus far lost in killed

and wounded, seven-eighths of all the officers who have been on duty with it.

In a preceding part of this article we have already shown that the greater part of our general officers who have thus far been killed in battle were from the old army, so that the complaints so often made of the number of generals who have never heard the sound of an enemy's gun, is scarcely applicable to that class of officers at least.

### A W A N T.

Besides a more rigid discipline in our volunteer force, what is needed now and always has been needed, is a larger permanent *regular* army—an army that will talk but little politics, that believes quite as much in discipline as patriotism, and whose officers are not aspiring to go to Congress.

If we had had one of even fifty thousand men, we doubt if this rebellion had ever broken out, and millions of money and thousands of lives would have been saved to the country. But the great evil of Democracies is the want of forethought; they are apt to look only at the present, and proposed measures for the prevention of *probable* troubles, and accompanied with certain and immediate expense, are generally unpopular; yet our national experience has fully demonstrated the fact that a regular establishment is not only the most efficient, but by far the most *economical* kind of force. But much difficulty has been experienced in keeping up our present comparatively small regular army to the legalized strength and from obvious causes. In order to obtain their quotas the States, counties, and towns have offered large bounties for volunteers in addition to the pay of the Federal Government, and men therefore naturally preferred enlisting as "*volunteers*," and thus receiving higher pay for their services to the country than regular troops. To obviate this result, an order was issued some months ago permitting volunteers who desired it to be transferred to the regular service; and as they had already received their bounties as volunteers, very many of them availed themselves of this permission, and thus supplied the regular army with



much excellent material. This order, however, is no longer in operation, having from some cause or other been rescinded within a month or so after it was issued.

At present our regular establishment consists of nineteen regiments of infantry, six of cavalry, and five of artillery. This force might, we think, be advantageously increased by at least seventy additional regiments, making one hundred in all—each arm of the service receiving its proportionate increase. With such an addition, it might be desirable to dispense with field batteries not in the hands of the regular companies. Poor artillery is much more likely to be injurious than beneficial to an army. By ineffective firing, and often at too long a range, they rob their arm of its moral effect and excite a contempt for it in the enemy, and when charged upon, it too often happens that their guns are abandoned just at the time when they begin to be really effective. There is reason to fear that the enemy has already been but *too liberally* supplied with ordnance in this way.

Whatever may be the termination of this conflict, it is more than probable that the country will need an army as large as the one proposed. It is the ballast necessary to keep the ship of State steady, not only in the storm of the revolution, but amid the heavy seas which will follow it. If a reduction ever should be deemed advisable, the number of men in the regiments might be diminished, and surplus officers might be employed with the militia in camps of instruction, and on various other duties under the Federal and State Governments. They might also be employed to advantage by these Governments in various positions of trust, not perhaps directly connected with the military service, for as disbursing officers, the officers of the regular army have always stood proudly pre-eminent on the records for their probity and fidelity to the Government. And this is not to be wondered at when we consider that they have held their offices by the tenure of good behaviour, have not been influenced by the corrupt principle of “rotation,” nor belonged to a school which regards public office as the “spoils of faction.”

The great question arises how is this force to be raised with the necessary promptness and care? We think this could best be done by converting the requisite number of volunteer regiments now in the field into regulars. In our several armies, boards of competent officers of the old or the additional regular army might be convened to pass upon the merits of parties desirous of commissions, and to recommend suitable persons for the various grades. The officers of those regiments selected for the regular service who could not pass the board, must necessarily be displaced; in some cases, it might be practicable to assign them to the vacancies created by the officers who had passed the board, and where this could not be done, they might be ordered to report to the Governors of their respective States, who could appoint them if it were desirable to fill vacancies in other regiments. Provision would also have to be made for those cases where an officer promoted to a new regiment would, by joining it, leave his old company without any commissioned officer. To make the matter more easy of accomplishment, as the officers appointed to the converted regiments would all be present and ready to go on duty at once, it would not be necessary or desirable at first to appoint to these regiments their full quota of officers. One field officer to command each regiment and two-thirds of the captains and lieutenants, so as to give two officers to each company, would at first be sufficient. The appointment of only one-half the field officers of each grade, would give every regiment a field officer to command it, and would besides provide for the promotion of those officers of the regular army who now hold field officer's commissions in the volunteer forces, and could not leave their present commands, without detriment to the service. Whatever additional number of regular general officers might be considered necessary, could at any future time be appointed, and it is probable that with so large a permanent regular army, it would not be considered desirable to increase in the usual proportion the number of such general officers. Generals to command the new brigades at first, might be selected from regular officers holding volunteer generals' rank.

When this programme was completed, it would leave all the generals' commissions, half the colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors, and one-third the captains and lieutenants' still to be filled. Promotion, as in the old army, should be based on seniority as far as this proposed organization would go, i. e. in a regiment, for instance, originally inaugurated with seven captains and six first and second lieutenants, promotions to vacancies in these places should be made in the ordinary way. The nine hundred original vacancies created by this plan, however, should be prizes to be filled by extraordinary promotion from the whole army, regular and volunteer. A place once filled by extraordinary promotion should afterwards be open to ordinary promotion only; thus the eighth captaincy in a regiment having once been filled by extraordinary promotion, should be afterwards filled by promotion in the ordinary way. Officers and soldiers recommended for extraordinary promotion should not receive their commissions without having some time or other previously passed a board of regular officers. Mere bravery in a soldier should not, of itself, be a cause for promotion; for disciplined soldiers are expected to do their duty, and are not presumed to be cowards. Officers should be more than brave; they should be of such education and habits as will give tone to the body to which they belong, and enable them to take a respectable position in society. In this matter the boards should keep in view the important advice of Washington on the same subject, and which has been previously quoted.

The public can scarcely conceive the immense amount of injury, both to the country and the private soldier, that is due to the ignorance of officers.

*Above all*, no political influences should be brought to bear to control or neutralize the action of these boards. Such influences have already done our military affairs a vast deal of mischief and crowded our armies with incompetent officers. If politics should control the business, then the whole of this proposed plan would do us harm on a gigantic scale, and no one would be more violently opposed to its adoption than the writer of this article.

All the details of the plan herein proposed for increasing the regular army may not be found entirely practicable, or free from valid objections, but the main object of the writer has been to shew the necessity for such an increase, and for the exercise of a cautious discrimination in the selection of officers. If the writer will have succeeded in awakening interest in the subject, in turning the thoughts of some reflecting minds in what he conceives to be the right direction, in exposing some popular humbugs which lie in the path of reform, and in showing that the sneers against a worthy institution are founded in "buncombe," and not in justice, he will be fully satisfied. That we may profit by the experience of the past—that all conservative men may unite in crushing out the demagogism, factions and heresies which have been so long sapping the dignity and power of the Federal Government, and that its flag may be borne triumphantly over every portion of the Republic, is his earnest hope.

In conclusion, he has only to say that this paper has been written hurriedly by one engrossed in the cares of professional pursuits, and who has cared more about what he had to say than how he said it.

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